

ADMISSION PROCESS – FAQs

Question: WHAT ARE THE STEPS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MUST FOLLOW TO APPLY TO A U.S. UNIVERSITY AS AN UNDERGRADUATE?

Answer: Step by Step Guide to Application Process

The application process may seem like a very complicated process, with a mountain of paperwork to complete and deadlines to follow. Here are a number of things to remember about the application process for international students. It is advisable to start this process approximately 18 months before you plan to begin studies in the U.S. The American academic year begins between August and September, and a majority of students generally request admission for this term. Most colleges & universities accept applications between November and January for the August-September entry period.

A) Obtain information about institutions that offer the program you want to pursue. Review the “[Search for Colleges & Universities](#)” section of our site to locate specific institutions that offer the degree you are seeking or consult an [EducationUSA advising center](#) in your country.

B) Communicate directly with the admissions offices of the U.S. educational institutions to obtain information and application forms. Indicate the major academic area of interest to you. Make sure that you have your name printed clearly on all correspondence as it appears in your passport.

C) Read all materials received carefully to determine: whether the program you want is offered; whether you meet the minimum academic requirement; if you require financial assistance; whether your proposed program is available; and whether you can meet the application deadlines.

D) Apply to at least three to five institutions. U.S. institutions receive many applications and often cannot accommodate all qualified applicants. You may decide which institution to attend after you have received your letters of acceptance.

E) Complete the admission application carefully and thoroughly. Be consistent when giving your name and contact information on the application and in all correspondence.

If some of your records are under a different name, be sure you indicate that on the application. Complete all items on the application and submit all items requested.

F) Submit the appropriate application fee in U.S. currency with your application (bank cheques, money orders or by credit card). Most institutions will not process an application without the fee.

G) Provide official academic records from local secondary and/or tertiary level in both your native language and in English translation. Official documents must bear the seal of the school and authorized signature. Photocopies are not usually acceptable unless they are officially attested as exact copies of the original document.

H) Non-native English speakers are usually required to take an English proficiency exam, either Test of English as a Foreign Language ([TOEFL](#)) or International English Language Testing System ([IELTS](#)). Register early for and request that the Educational Testing Service forward your scores to the institutions to which you are applying.

I) Register for the tests required by the institution to which you are applying for example: [SAT](#) and [SAT](#) subject tests, or [ACT](#) tests are typically suggested for undergraduate applicants, and [GRE](#) or [GMAT](#) are accepted by graduate admission programs.

J) Request letters of recommendation as required by the program/institution. Teachers and guidance counselors, professors, mentors, and supervisors generally write these letters.

K) Submit verification of scholarship or other financial support.

L) Note the deadlines for application. Allow time for mail delays, application consideration, and for obtaining passport and visa when you are admitted. Apply early.

M) Allow 6 to 8 weeks after sending your complete application to the institution of your choice for an admission decision. Many schools and departments, however, send admission offers around March and April for the semester beginning in August/September.

N) It is courteous to notify an institution if you will not accept their offer of admission.

Remember: Institutions will only forward the Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) after you have been accepted, your level of English proficiency has been determined, and your funding has been established as sufficient to meet the institution's expenses.

Question: WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN THE U.S.?

Answer: To be eligible for admission to a U.S. college or university, you must meet certain minimum entry requirements. These include a secondary school diploma or examination results, English language ability, and in many cases a score from one of the U.S. aptitude tests either the [SAT](#) or [ACT](#). Each university will have their own requirements for admission so it is important to research what the universities may require that you are interested in attending. It is important that your secondary school study has included a variety of subjects such as English, Mathematics, natural sciences, humanities or social sciences, and foreign language.

Question: WHAT ARE THE STEPS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MUST FOLLOW TO APPLY TO A U.S. UNIVERSITY FOR A GRADUATE PROGRAM?

Answer: If you have completed or are in the final year of a bachelor's degree, you can apply for a masters program at a US university. The university you apply to will assess the degree you have and the scores you received on these exams. These exams are typically mandatory for all US universities.

U.S. graduate schools are all independent, and each sets its own requirements for admission. Within each school individual programs may often have different requirements. It is advisable to start this process approximately one to one-and-a-half years before you hope to begin studies in the U.S. The American academic year begins in August or September, and students should generally request admission for the "fall" or "autumn" term.

Obtain information about institutions which offer the program you want to pursue. Use reference guides, such as [Peterson's Guide](#) and the [Directory of Graduate Programs](#), to locate specific institutions which offer the program at the degree level (master's or doctorate) you are seeking.

Write directly to the graduate admissions offices of the institutions to obtain information and applications. Indicate the major academic area of interest to you. Carefully print your name and address on all such inquiries. You should also write to the department. Stress field of specialization, professional background, reasons for choosing particular faculty and ask for information on financial aid possibilities. You do not need the name of the department chairman or a professor to obtain an application. Advise each office that you have contacted the other.

Read all materials thoroughly that you receive to determine whether the program you want is offered; whether you appear to meet the minimum academic requirement; if you require financial assistance, whether it is available for your proposed programs; and whether you can meet the application deadlines.

Apply to more than one institution. U.S. institutions receive many applications and often cannot accommodate all qualified applicants. You may decide which institution to attend after you have received your admission offers.

Complete the admission application carefully and legibly. Always give your name in exactly the same way on the application and in all correspondence. If some of your records are under a different name, be sure you indicate that on the application. Complete all items on the application and submit all items requested.

If an application fee is required, submit the appropriate amount in U.S. currency with your application. Most institutions will not process your application without the fee.

Request your official academic records from your schools in both your native language and in English translation. Official documents must bear the seal of the school and authorized signature. Photocopies are not usually acceptable unless they are officially attested as exact copies of the original. Records should be submitted for all post-secondary schools attended and should provide a list of courses taken, yearly examination results, and conferral of degrees. If your native language is not English, register as early as possible for the [Test of English as a Foreign Language](#) (TOEFL) and request that Educational Testing Service forward your scores to the institutions to which you are applying.

Register for the [Graduate Record Examination](#) (GRE), the [Graduate Management Admissions Test](#) (GMAT), or other tests if required by the program/institution to which you are applying. Request letters of recommendation written by professors with whom you have studied as required by the program/institution.

Submit verification of scholarship or other financial support.

Note the deadlines for application given in the institutional information you receive. Different institutions/programs have different deadlines. Allow time for mail delays, application consideration, and for obtaining passport and visa when you are admitted. Apply early. Stated application deadlines are generally the final date for receipt of applications and all supporting credentials. Additional time is required to process applications from international students.

Allow 6-8 weeks after your application file is completed with an institution to receive their admission decision. Many schools and departments, however, send admission offers only in March and April.

It is courteous to notify an institution if you will not be accepting their offer of admission.

Remember: A Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) cannot be issued until you have been admitted, your level of English proficiency has been determined and your funding has been established as a sufficient amount to meet the institution's expenses. A Certificate of Eligibility is valid only for study in the institution which issued it - and only for the starting dates.

Question: WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY TO A GRADUATE PROGRAM IN THE U.S.?

Answer: No uniform procedure exists for graduate admissions in the U.S. The graduate admissions office usually shares the responsibility for admissions with the academic departments and most commonly there is a graduate admissions committee for each department made up of faculty members and graduate admissions office staff. It is a good idea from the beginning of the process to network with both the graduate admissions office and your specific department of interest.

In addition to the match between the strength of your application and the admissions standard of a school or department, two other factors may influence your chances of admission. First, graduate student research may be highly specialized and dependent of the availability of a faculty member who shares a student's interest and on resources available in the department. A department may suggest that you be admitted because your research interests match well with those of a particular a faculty member, or may advise against admission because faculty members and resources for your research are lacking. Secondly, sine faculty members review applications to decide who should receive any available research or teaching assistantships, departments often look for applicants who can teach or do research in particular areas.

To be eligible to apply for a graduate level program, you should have completed, or be about to complete, a first academic or professional degree. In the U.S. this typically takes four years of university study to complete, giving U.S. students 16 years in total at secondary school and college/university. If your first academic degree required only three years of study, or if you have completed only 14 or 15 years of school and university study combined, or if your degree study involved courses in only a single technical field, it will be up to the university you are interested in as to whether you will be eligible for admission to a graduate degree program. Although all U.S. universities follow the same general guidelines, they may differ in the level at which they recognize a particular degree from your country.

Graduate school applicants should also have excellent grades, particularly in the chosen field of study. Most graduate departments require, at a minimum, the equivalent of a U.S. "B" grade average in undergraduate work. Staff at [EducationUSA advising centers](#) will be able to tell you the equivalent to this grade average in your own educational system. Proven research ability or relevant work experience also increases your chances of admission at the graduate level.

To complete graduate study in the U.S. successfully, you will need to be able to read, write, and communicate orally in English with a high degree of proficiency. English language proficiency will also help you to achieve your academic and personal goals while in the U.S.

Question: WHAT ARE THE ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTENDING AN MBA PROGRAM IN THE U.S.?

Answer: Admissions procedures differ somewhat and not all programs require the same criteria. However, there are some common elements that admissions committees are looking for .It is always best to get your specific information from the business school itself. Usually the school's

website will give you ample information. Your task is to put the pieces of the puzzle together so you can verify that you meet the MBA admission requirements.

Business prerequisites can be part of the admission requirements. Some programs require you to have a certain "body of knowledge" in business subjects before you can start. If prerequisites exist, the school should specify the way (or ways) to satisfy prerequisites.

Some or all of the items below will be needed to create an application package:

Application Form - There is usually some sort of application form that you submit. Most schools charge a non-refundable fee for each application submitted. These days, most applications forms can be submitted online.

Official Transcripts - Because the MBA is a master's level degree, you are required to have a bachelor's degree before you enter the program. Therefore, you need to send official transcript copies from each college you attended. This will be used to verify degree and prerequisites completion as well as Grade Point Average (GPA).

Work Resume - Many MBA programs recommend or even require you to have a certain number of years of full-time work experience. The rule of thumb is two years for full-time programs and much more for executive programs. You should submit a work-related resume to verify work experience requirements if applicable.

Admissions Test Score - An admissions test may be required to be admitted to a program. The [GMAT](#) (Graduate Management Admissions Test) is by far the most common. Occasionally you might be allowed to use previous [GRE](#) (Graduate Records Examination) test results. Test scores must be sent to each MBA school applied to and are good for 5 years.

Letters of Recommendation - Business schools usually want to know how you work with others in both a business and academic environment. Therefore, two or three letters of recommendation will be required. These recommendation letters usually come from people like previous professors, employers, and other associates.

Application Essays - Most schools want to know about you and why you want to pursue an MBA at their school. This means that one or more essays are required. This gives you an opportunity to portray yourself and express your goals.

International students will have a few requirements in addition to those listed. For example, international students will need to verify they have an acceptable bachelor's degree. Also, where English is a second language, English proficiency will have to be verified by an English proficiency test.

It should also be noted that some schools require interviews in one shape or another. This is another great way for you to show why you belong in the MBA program you are applying for. If applicable, this would usually take place after you have submitted your application package.

There are a huge number of MBA programs in the U.S. For more information please refer to: www.mba.com

<p>Question: WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND STEPS ONE MUST FOLLOW TO APPLY TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE U.S.?</p>
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Answer: Community colleges operate an “open” admissions policy. This means anyone who wishes to enroll and meets the minimum entry requirements can do so.

Each institution will have its own set of admission requirements, but the minimum usually includes the following:

- Completed application form
- Proof of secondary school completion, usually 12 years of schooling
- Certification of English language proficiency – [TOEFL](#) or [IELTS](#)
- Evidence of financial support

The English language proficiency requirement is often lower for a community college than it is for a four-year institution. In addition, if your score is a little below the entry requirement, the community college may still admit you into the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Successful completion of all the prescribed ESL courses will open the door to the wider academic world of the community college.

As with four-year colleges, students should contact the admissions office of the two-year college to request international admissions information. Many community colleges now have websites with downloadable or on-line applications. To search for community colleges specifically you can visit the [American Association of Community Colleges](#) website for a search engine.

Question: WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WHO WANT TO ATTEND HIGH SCHOOL IN THE U.S.?

Answer: The U.S. has placed restrictions on foreign students in U.S. Public elementary (kindergarten through eighth grades) and secondary (grades nine through twelve) schools. Secondary school is also called high school. The restrictions are given below:

- prohibits foreign students from attending public elementary schools or publicly-funded adult education programs
- limits secondary school attendance to twelve months
- requires secondary school students to pay the school the full, unsubsidized per capita cost (cost for each student) of education
- restrictions Are for F-1 Students Only
- restrictions apply to these foreign students:
 - foreign students in F-1 status who need an I-20 to study in the United States;
 - foreign students in F-1 status in Public schools who leave the United States and want to return to continue their studies; and
 - foreign students in F-1 status who want to transfer from a Private school or program into a Public school or program.
- restrictions do not apply to the following foreign students:
 - foreign students in another visa status, such as J-2, L-1, M-2, or G-4.
 - foreign students in F-1 status who attend Private Schools or Private training or Language Programs

Foreign students who want to attend Public high school must pay the full, unsubsidized per capita (for each student) cost of education. The full, unsubsidized per capita (for each student) cost of education is the cost of providing education to each student in the school district where the public school is located. Costs normally range between \$3000 and \$10,000.

Source: http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1269.html

Question: WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE TO TRANSFER TO A U.S. COLLEGE UNIVERSITY FROM A UNIVERSITY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY?

Answer: Students transfer every year from other countries into U.S. degree programs and successfully go on to complete their degrees. However, the structure of degrees in other countries rarely matches the structure of U.S. degrees, making the transfer process more complicated.

The transfer institution needs to consider a number of factors when granting credit for the courses you have taken at a non-U.S. institution

Three main factors that U.S. universities usually consider:

1. Is your university or college recognized by the ministry of education in your country? U.S. colleges are looking for institutions that are recognized by a ministry of education; however, if some other authority approves your college, it may still be acceptable.
2. How similar is the nature or character of the courses you have taken to those offered at the transfer institution? U.S. schools usually assess similarity by looking at information from course descriptions, syllabi, or catalogs. If your institution is not well known in the United States, the college may have to do a more detailed evaluation with you when you arrive, and only then decide whether and how to grant transfer credit.
3. How applicable are your courses toward the degree, and in particular the major, that you wish to pursue? This will often involve evaluation of the courses by both the admissions office and the academic department to which you wish to be admitted. They will look at whether courses can be accepted for transfer credit first, and then at whether they can count toward the requirements for a specific major. Again this decision may not take place until after you have arrived, and the decision may vary from college to college. Applying courses toward a particular major is most difficult for professional programs such as engineering, architecture, or journalism, where course requirements are carefully structured and often dictated by accrediting bodies for the profession.

In addition, to make the transfer process run as smoothly as possible, you are advised to:

Make sure all academic records provided are official and bear the original stamp or seal of the issuing institution. Submit course descriptions in English for all post-secondary courses taken. They should also include:

- Summaries or outlines of the major topics covered in each course (If an outline is not available, write a summary yourself and have it certified by your school as accurate)
- The number of units or hours required in lecture and laboratory for each course on a weekly basis;
- The length of the term or academic year, and, if it is not given elsewhere, the year in which you took the course.

Prepare a list of textbooks used in each course as this will help in any decisions that are made after you arrive at the campus about whether to grant credit for particular courses.

Provide information on the total number of courses, credits, or units required for the diploma or degree program from which you are transferring. Students who transfer into a U.S. institution may also be able to receive credit for their secondary school work if it is considered to be comparable to introductory college-level work in the United States.

Question: DO MEDICAL SCHOOLS IN THE U.S. CONSIDER APPLICANTS WITH AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE RECEIVED OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.?

Answer: Admission to medical study is very competitive. Less than half of U.S. citizen applicants are accepted to medical school, and typically less than 3 percent of international applicants are accepted and most were individuals who had completed their undergraduate education in the U.S. Because medical schools, particularly public medical schools, are funded largely by taxes raised in the states where they are located, admission preference is usually given to residents of that state. Some state supported schools will consider only U.S. citizens and permanent residents for admission.

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Question: WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR AN INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATE TO APPLY TO MEDICAL SCHOOL IN THE U.S.?

Answer: Medical school usually lasts four years and students graduate with the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree. Admission requirements include an undergraduate degree, preferably from a U.S. accredited institution. Degrees in almost any discipline are acceptable as long as the student's course load includes the required minimum number of prerequisite courses in the biological sciences, chemistry, mathematics, behavioral and social science and humanities. Additional requirements include an excellent undergraduate academic record, fluency in English, and extracurricular activities such as work experience and volunteer commitments as well as satisfactory score on the [Medical College Admission Test](#) (MCAT), a standardized entrance examination.

The Association of American Medical Colleges (<http://www.aamc.org>) publishes an annual guide to medical schools that includes useful information and statistics on admission requirements.

To be eligible to practice medicine in the U.S. all physicians regardless of whether they were educated in the U.S. or outside the U.S. must:

- Receive the first professional medical degree from a medical school accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education.
- Complete a period of residency or graduate medical education.
- Pass state licensure examinations.

U.S. graduate training for physicians generally involves completing a prescribed period of clinical training called a residency. While entry to residencies is quite competitive, international physicians have better chances to pursue U.S. study at this level than at the first professional level. To obtain residency positions, graduates of medical schools outside the U.S. must pass a certification program administered by the [Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates](#) (ECFMG).

After passing the required exams (see below) and achieving ECFMG certification, you can apply to the residency programs of your choice through the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS). This typically occurs during September and October. Source: <http://www.ecfm.org/eras>

After reviewing the applications, admissions officers invite select applicants for interviews which typically take place during November, December and January.

In February, following the interview process, both applicants and programs rank each other through the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) <http://www.nrmp.org>, a service that provides an impartial venue for matching the preferences of applicants and programs.

Following acceptance, the medical school sends an information packet and contract, The J1 visa is the typical visa for residents. Once the final certifications have passed between you, and the medical program, contact your U.S. Embassy or Consulate to set up a visa interview and inquire about all of the documents required for your visa.

Medical Licensing Test Information - Please be informed that the [United States Medical Licensing Examination](#) (USMLE) Step 1 and Step 2-Clinical Knowledge examination are administered worldwide at the test centers of Thomson Prometric but you can not take the USMLE Step 2-Clinical Skills (CS) examination outside of the U.S. Registered applicants select a test center, subject to availability, when they schedule a test date.

The Step 1 exam is an eight-hour, computer-based, multiple-choice exam covering knowledge in the basic medical sciences: anatomy, behavioral sciences, biochemistry, microbiology, pathology, pharmacology, physiology and interdisciplinary topics

The Step 2 CK is a nine-hour, computer-based, multiple-choice test that covers clinical sciences including diagnosis, the understanding of disease mechanisms, and care management principles.

The Step 2 CS exam must be taken at a regional clinical skills evaluation centers in the United States. The day-long exam consists of twelve fifteen-minute examinations of standardized patients with ten minutes to compose a written record of the encounter (Patient Note). You will be graded on your medical history and physical examination data-gathering skills, communication and interpersonal abilities, and English language proficiency.

The definitive source of information on Step 2 Clinical Skills is the USMLE Bulletin of Information. For additional information on the USMLE, refer to the USMLE website www.usmle.org. For more about the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification requirements, please visit the following Website: www.ecfm.org

<p>Question: CAN ONE BE ADMITTED TO A UNIVERSITY IN THE U.S. WITHOUT TAKING A TOEFL OR IELTS TEST?</p>

Answer: If you are a non-U.S. citizen and a non-native speaker of English but you have been educated in English for most of your school life, your test for English language proficiency requirement may be waived. Allow time in the application process to correspond with U.S. institutions about this issue. American colleges & universities are unlikely to accept secondary school English language examination results as proof of your language ability.

Question: WHAT DOCUMENT IS NEEDED AS PROOF OF FINANCES FOR ADMISSION TO A U.S. COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY?

Answer: Most colleges & universities include a form called a Declaration and Certification of Finances or Affidavit of Financial Support in their application packets. This must be signed by your parents or whoever is meeting your college expenses, and must be certified by a bank or lawyer. Keep a copy of this form since you will also need it to apply for your student visa. Schools usually need to know that you have at least the first year's expenses covered, although many may also ask you to indicate your source of income for the entire period of study. If you know when you apply that you will need some form of assistance from the college, indicate how much you plan to request from the university. Do not wait until you have been accepted into a university to request assistance as it will be too late in most instances. Please note that the university will issue the relevant certificate of eligibility for a student visa only if you are able to document fully your source(s) of income.

Question: IS IT POSSIBLE TO TRANSFER TO ANOTHER UNIVERSITY ONCE I HAVE BEEN ADMITTED TO A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY IN THE U.S.?

Answer: Yes. The application process as a transfer student takes time, and you should begin to plan your transfer at least 12 months before the date you wish to start studying at the new institution. Carefully study the section in each college catalog on transferring. Often this will include information on the college's policy on transfer of credit.

The application process for transfer students differs slightly from that of first-year applicants. Transfer students often fill out a separate application form, and the new college usually wants to know the following main things:

1. Why do you want to transfer to this institution? You will be asked to write a personal statement outlining your reasons for wishing to transfer. This is probably the single most important part of your application and it should be a statement of why the new school will better suit your academic needs.
2. What courses of study have you taken, or are you currently taking?
3. What has been your college experience so far? Transfer applicants are expected to have performed well at their current institution and to have proven themselves in higher education.

In addition to the above, you will also need to provide the same items as freshman applicants to the college, including recommendations, transcripts, admissions test scores, and an application essay.

Transferring is not an easy way into the more selective universities; in fact, many of the more competitive colleges have even more demanding admissions standards at the transfer level than at the freshman level. Many colleges provide statistics on the percentage of applicants accepted for both freshman and transfer admission, which allows you to get a better idea of how competitive the entry is to a particular institution as a transfer student.

Because general education requirements are similar at many U.S. colleges, students who transfer from one U.S. institution to another are likely to find that their courses are recognized and transfer easily. Transferring courses you have taken as requirements for a particular major may be more complicated. Sometimes the courses taken for a certain major may not meet the requirements for the same major at the transfer institution. When you are discussing with a college how many transfer credits you will receive, it is important to check and understand the distinction between a general acceptance of credit for transfer purposes, and acceptance of credits to meet the requirements for graduation with a degree in a certain discipline.

You may consider the following suggestions for ways that students can maximize their transfer credits:

1. Take any required general education courses during your first two years of study.
2. Take any prerequisites for your major at your original institution, as these will help you get accepted into another college, particularly if your major is highly competitive. Prerequisites are preparatory courses that are required before you can start studying for the major itself.
3. Plan to take the majority of the courses required for your major after you arrive at the transfer institution as these are more difficult to transfer.
4. If you are studying at a community college, work closely with your academic adviser in planning your course schedule and take courses designated as "transfer courses".
5. You can ask a college to reconsider its decision about transfer credit. Sometimes a transcript or course description provides insufficient information to enable a college to grant credit; further information may allow them to make a decision in your favor.

Question: CAN I ENTER A U.S. COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY MID YEAR?

Answer: Many colleges or universities will accept enrollment for any of their terms. For schools that operate on a semester calendar mid-year admission is sometime in January. Colleges that use the quarter system (three terms) may offer admission both in the winter term (January) and the spring term (March). The precise date differs for each institution. Deadlines for mid-year admissions are usually six to nine months in advance of enrollment. If you are applying for admission in January, you should take any admissions tests at least six months beforehand. Please note that most undergraduate students enter in the fall term (August/September).

Question: WHAT ARE EARLY DECISION AND EARLY ACTION ADMISSIONS?

Answer: If you find a college that you're sure is right for you, consider applying early. Early decision and early action plans allow you to apply early (usually in November) and get an admissions decision from the college well in advance of the usual spring notification date. You'll know by December or January whether you've been accepted at your first-choice college.

Sometimes, students who apply under these plans have a better chance of acceptance than they would through the regular admissions process. These plans are also good for colleges, because they get students who really want to go to the school to commit early in the process.

- **Early Decision vs. Early Action**
- You should be aware of the differences between early decision and early action before sending in your applications. The exact rules may vary somewhat by college. Check with your counselor to make sure you understand your rights and obligations.

- **Early decision plans are binding.** You agree to attend the college if it accepts you and offers an adequate financial aid package. Although you can apply to only one college for early decision, you may apply to other colleges through the regular admissions process. If you're accepted by your first-choice college early, you must withdraw all other applications. Usually, colleges insist on a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1.
- **Early action plans are similar but are not binding, unlike early decision.** If you've been accepted, you can choose to commit to the college immediately, or wait until the spring. Under these plans, you may also apply early action to other colleges. Usually, you have until the late spring to let the college know your decision.
- **Single-choice early action is a new option offered by a few colleges.** This plan works the same way as other early action plans, but candidates may not apply early (either early action or early decision) to any other school. You can still apply to other schools and are not required to give your final answer of acceptance until the regular decision deadline.

Question: WHAT STANDARDISED TESTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS?

Answer: Besides tests of English language proficiency ([TOEFL](#) or [IELTS](#)) the other standardized tests are:

- [GRE](#): Graduate Record Examination, often required of applicants to graduate schools in fields other than professional programs such as medicine, dentistry, or law. Both a GRE general test and subject tests for specific fields are offered.
- [GMAT](#) – Graduate Management Admission Test: The GMAT exam is a standardized assessment, delivered in English, which helps business schools assess the qualifications of applicants for advanced study in business and management.

Question: WHAT STANDARDISED TESTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION TO UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS?

Answer: Besides tests of English language proficiency ([TOEFL](#) or [IELTS](#)) the other standardized tests are:

- [SAT](#) I– Scholastic Assessment Test – The SAT I - a measure of the critical thinking skills you and assesses how well you analyze and solve problems. The test entails critical reading, mathematics and writing.
- [SAT](#) Subject Tests – The SAT Subject tests measure knowledge in specific subject areas. Many U.S. colleges and universities either require or recommend one or more SAT Subject test scores for admission. Some colleges specify which subject tests you must take while others leave the option up to you.
- [ACT](#) – American College Testing Assessment – The ACT measures English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning.

Question: CAN I APPLY TO COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY ON LINE?

Answer: Yes. The use of computers in the application process and in completing other college procedures is very common. If at all possible, use the electronic application provided by the college. This will accelerate the application process for you and make it easier for the college to

process your application. Some colleges waive the application fee if you use their electronic application.

Question: ARE THEIR DEADLINES FOR APPLYING TO COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES IN THE U.S.?

Answer: Yes. Each institution sets its own deadline date, and it is usually firm about not accepting applications after that time, particularly if a college is very popular. Deadlines usually fall between January and March, although they can be as early as November for “early decision” or as late as June. If, however, a college indicates that it operates “rolling admissions,” late applicants may still have a fair chance of acceptance. In this case, a university will admit and reject candidates until the freshman class is filled. It is nonetheless a good idea to submit your application as soon as possible.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all your documents, application forms, references, and official score reports reach the universities safely and on time. Send your documents by registered mail or by courier if you are very close to deadline dates. It is worthwhile telephoning or sending an e-mail to colleges to make sure that they have received your application package and that they have everything they require. Keep copies of your application and documents just in case your material gets lost in the mail; you will be relieved to know that you can supply another set of information quickly, if this should happen.

Question: WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PERSONAL STATEMENT IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Answer: Many schools ask applicants to submit a written personal statement or essay as part of the admissions process. When university admissions officers read this part of the application, they may look to see whether the student can contribute to the school and if the school can meet his or her needs. The personal statement gives universities a chance to get a personal glimpse of you, an insight that is not possible in the grades and numbers that make up the rest of your application. In general, essay questions either require a specific response or are open-ended. Colleges look for certain qualities for their student body and tailor their essay questions accordingly.

Application essays also allow admissions officers to assess your writing skills, academic ability, organizational skills, purpose in applying to a U.S. institution, and your reasons for your chosen field of study. Admissions officers look for strong writing skills, as well as a demonstration of intellectual curiosity and maturity. Write the essay far enough in advance so that you have time to put it aside for a week and then read it again to see if it still makes sense. This shows through in your essay, and tells admissions officers that you are a good writer, that you care about the essay, and that you are willing to take the time to prepare it well.

Some general tips:

DO:

- Answer the question asked.
- Focus on a specific incident or event you remember well - details are important.
- Consider explaining anything unusual that has influenced your school or home life.
- Get others to proofread it for grammatical and spelling errors.

DO NOT:

- Be dishonest.
- Choose a topic merely to look good.
- Say what you think the college wants to hear; just tell the truth about your reasons for applying to the school.
- Turn down the college's invitation to write more about yourself.
- Write the essay (or any other part of your application) the night before it is due.

Make sure that your essay is a true representation of yourself and your abilities. The most important part of the essay is to be genuine and honest — admissions officers read several hundred essays each year and have become experts in picking out fake essays or those written by parents. The essay is your opportunity to tell the college why they should accept you over other students — use it as such.